

# Midwinter Finds Theaters In State of Prosperity

Author-Producer of Picturesque Persian Play Finds Telegraphic Interview Unique Experience-Melodrama Washington Started on Road to Success Returns This Week-Other Theaters.

### By JULIA CHANDLER MANZ.

Christmas has once again passed into history, and the young year of 1916 finds the American Theater in more prosperous condition than any of its recent predecessors. New York playhouses have been crowded with pleasure seekers since the opening of the current season, and the entire country has registered this revival of enthusiasm for theatrical entertain-The percentage of failures among new productions has been comparatively small, and revivals of one-time successes have been accorded substantial welcome

After several seasons of deplorably bad business the situation is good to contemplate. It not only proves the fallacy of the pessimistic cry of waning interests in the drama, but encourages producers to increase their activities. There isn't a theatrical firm in New York that will not make numerous new productions before the Lenten season begins. David Belasco is even now at work on two new plays-one a piece from the pen of George Scarborough which Mr. Belasco had arranged to produce in conjunction with phrase was no longer apt, for in a single the late Charles Frohman just prior to the latter's death. The other is a new vehicle for Frances Starr that is soon to go into rehearsal. Announcements from the Shubert offices indicate a forthcoming season of unprecedented activity, with other producing firms equally as sanguine of the continuance of the tremendous prosperity which the current season has, until

Before the spring buds shall burst Washington will have had more dramatic premieres than in any other season within my memory if promises are fulfilled. Already one new play has followed another in interesting succession, the current week furnishing the first respite from initial performances that has been ours for some time.

The leading theaters here will inaugurate the new year tomorrow evening with established successes, Richard Walton Tully's play of exquisite imagery and poetry, "Omar, the Tentmaker," tenanting the Belasco while Wil- ated the dominant roles of the Mack lard Mack's melodrama, "Kick In," will occupy the boards of the National. piece here, and headed the cast when it

We have seen both productions, Mr. Tully's spectacular offering having went from Washington to a tremenbrought to us last year the oriental mysticism and oppulent poesy of the dously successful New York season picturesque Persia of the twelfth century in a series of dramatic incidents, when it reverted to its former vaude-Mack prece had its first performance in this city at the Columbia

Theater October 5, 1914, under another title. Having stripped my vocabulary in expressing my pleasure and satisfac- the Columbia Theater of his melotion in Mr. Tully's splendid achievement, as both author and producer, when drama with that (in November, 1914) his dramatic version of the life of Omar Khayyam was given us last year I of his domestic drama, "So Much for was wondering just what further I could say to persuade my readers not to So Much," in which the playwright was miss their last chance of seeing their Rubaiyat draped in all the sensuous seen supporting his gifted wife, Marbeauty of which the vinuous one sang when Mr. Taylor, of the Belasco The- jorie Rambeau. "So Much for So ater, told me that Mr. Tully would be in Washington tomorrow night for Much," although a delightful comedy,

"In time to tell me why he has specialized in big spectacles?" I ques-

"No:" said Mr. Taylor, regretfully.

the opening of the return engagement of "Omar."

Then his eyes lighted with sudden inspiration.

"But why not interview Mr. Tully by wire?" he asked. Some scheme, that!

And it worked-beautifully. To Mr. Tully in New York went the following message from me:

"Would appreciate telegraphic interview with you for Sunday. Please wire me why you specialize in spectacular dramas; what you consider their status to be; and to what you attribute the unusual success and longevity of "Omar, the Tentmaker."

Next morning I found on my desk the following night letter from Mr.

"Delighted to oblige. I specialize in spectacular dramas because I feel that the average theatergoer loves romance best of all, and because romance is more glamorous and effective if presented with pictorial charm. My plays, including "The Rose of the Rancho," "The Bird of Paradise" and "Omar have all been sumptuous in scenic adornments because I feel that if characters are presented among charming pictorial settings, the interest of the spectator is instantly aroused. It is sometimes argued that beautiful scenery distracts the attention from the drama itself. I do not agree with this, Surely the thrilling moments of a yacht race are none the less gripping because of the lovely picture white sails make flashing against blue waves and the blue skies. In the same way I believe that if a play is really worth while, beautiful scenic adornments can never detract from its interest, but rather serve as an added charm.

"As to the status of spectacular plays, I think that in the American theater they are apt to live longer than most any other sort of play. Take for instance "Ben Hur," the most profitable play ever produced. Consider also such tremendous successes as "If I Were King," "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Kismet," all of which were spectacular. Such plays generally appeal directly to the imagination of the auditors, and their lure is perpetual.

"I attribute the success of 'Omar,' and its record of constant playing through three years, first of all to the fact that as a spectacle it has pleased many thousands of theatergoers; secondly, to the lovableness of its central figure-Omar Khayyam-who is one of the most fascinating men the world has ever known, and lastly to the memorable characterization of Guy Bates Post in the title-role. It is hard to tell which element has aided most, but it has been very gratifying to me to find that such a play has pleased so many people. I believe that such plays will always hold their own, and it is worthy of note that one of the biggest successes in New York this season is a delightful, clean spectacle based upon Robert Louis Stevenson's immortal 'Treasure Island.'

All of which is sufficiently interesting to make me mighty glad that !

followed Mr. Taylor's suggestion!

At the beginning of the dramatic season of 1913-14 a New York dra-

matic critics spoke of Willard Mack as an "impending playwright." The phrase was expressive enough, and described just the Eastern attitude toward this ambitious chap who came to us out of the West. Then A. H. Woods made the first production of Mr. Mack's four-act melodrama, "Birds of Prey," at the Columbia Theater in this city a year ago last October, and the dramatic writer's night came to us the realization that here was a playwright already arrived and one to be reckoned with.

Mr. Mack made his play out of a vaudeville sketch which he had used to exploit the gifts of his wife (Marjorie Rambeau) and himself on the Pacific Coast, and in the making achieved a melodrama as full of "punch" as "Within the Law," and one which sounded a greater human note than its crook-

Jane Grey and John Barrymore crerille title of "Kick In."

Mr. Mack followed the premiere at failed to "catch on" in New York and was shortly released for stock produc-

But "Kick In" went with a vim, establishing Mr. Mack in the East as a money for A. H. Woods, its producer.

And now it returns to us at the National for this week, while Mr. Fred G. Berger inaugurates his regime as resident manager of Poli's Washington Theater with the first local presentation of "Along Came Ruth," the Hall Players begin their third week at the Casino in Hoyt's "A Bachelor's Honeymoon," and vaudeville meets the demand for plenty of frivol and frolic.

### Woman's Peace Party.

It is interesting to know that in spite great organizations advocating preparedness and the abuse of some men supposedly great, the society that had its birth here in Washington one year ago, now called the Woman's Party, will hold its first annual tion next week at the New Willard Hotel. The sessions begin Saturday, January 8, and last until the lith. At Poll's Theater on Sunday, January 9, at 3 p. m., there will be a mass meeting, at which Miss Jane Addams will preside. At this meeting there will be many famous speakers.

### Barrymore to Be Manager.

Mrs. John Drew was for many years a Ethel Barrymore, her granddaughter, has decided to take up the managerial burden. She will establish herself in an office in the Lyceum theater and assume the action during for her new calling.



Belasco Theater this week in Richard Walton Tully's Persian spectacle, ances next week will also be Mr Post's final appearances in Washing successful playwright, and coining appear in a new play that Mr. Tully almost finished for the use of his

> One of the most popular features of "Omar, the Tentmaker," is the poetic atmosphere that pervades the play. The audience is transported bodily out

into the long ago.

The play is an exceptional one, especially to lovers of old Omar, who know him best as a lover of wine, rest and indifference to all other things. Here we find him first as an ardent young lover, later as osophic young recluse, and f heart-broken and contented old pilgrim to whom sudden and unexpected has come in the finding daughter whom he did not know lived, and in the reunion with the one love of his life, Shireen. The play con-tains many dramatic and intense mo-ments, interspersed with considerable

Mr. Post is ideally suited to the requirements of this many side-part. Much praise is also won by the mem-bers of the supporting company, all of whom render valuable assistance in the unfolding of Mr. Tully's intricate and thrilling drama.

## National-"Kick In."

When A. H. Woods read the manuscript of that subsequently successful play, "Kick In," he complained to the author, Willard Mack, that it contained so much new slang that he was afraid lest many of the audience afraid lest many of the audience has decided to take up the managerial burden. She will establish herself in an office in the Lyceum theater and assume the active duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without delegant in the sective duties for her new calling without deep and of the underworld terms which with her enterprise. After years of despair of the underworld terms which with her enterprise. After years of despair of the underworld terms which with her enterprise. After years of heads a pirit of the underworld terms which with her enterprise. After years of heads a light of the delegant in the section at the New National Theater this afternoon and evening. The feater this afternoon and evening and evening from the despins with her enterprise. After years of in the inst year, therms to the play the heads of the active duties from the first and the program now of five star motion pletures will be the attraction at the New National Theater this afternoon and evening. The theater this afternoon and evening. The theater this afternoon and evening and evening the above sing with the enterprise. After years of indications of the underworld terms which with her enterprise. After years of five star motion pletures will be the attraction at the heat stream of the elastics of the play heat of the play to the play and the becomes so inflated with success that he even allows himself of the luttery of a racing stable.

What's in a Name!

What's in a Name would be unable to understand

that his brother-in-law has in his possession the \$20,000 diamond necklace torial, together with other added attractor which the police are scouring the city. Although the brother-in-law lifts a chair to defend himself against search and threatens to smash in the skull of Chick Hewes, the latter ap-proaches him until their faces are within an inch of each other and in Frank A selected his principles as much for their a tone which rings with the harsh-ness of steel, cries out "kick in." Cow-ed by the determination of Hewes, the brother-in-law draws forth and hands singing ability as for their other talents. Augusta Lang, the prima donna, was hast seen in Washington with Raymond Hitchcock in "The Red Widow;" Maudie Heath, and Edna Green are other femiover the precious string of jewels. It is during this scene that the usners nine entertainers in the cast. Figure 3. usually are compelled to run down the aisles and quiet the audience.

"Kick in" comes to the National of the company. The vehicle is a two-party of the company. The vehicle is a two-party of the company. The vehicle is a two-party of the company. is during this scene that the ushers Theater tomorrow. act musical farce entitled "Two bands and One Wife," and boasts of a

### "Along Came Ruth." Turning from the melodramatic thrills of "Under Cover," the Poli Play-

ers will be seen this week in a comlike "Under Cover," edy which. never before been presented to the Washington public. It is Henry W. tractive environment not often found in burlesque. The first setting is an in Savage's play, "Along Came which was produced at the Galety Theater, New York, and subsequently ran all summer at the Olympic The-Chicago.

"Along Came Ruth" tells of the adventures of a young normal school graduate in Oldport, Me. Ruth finds everything in this New England town going to seed, but she is very much siasm are contagious. She finds an opening in Israel Putnam Hubbard's

example of high art motion pictures e example of high art motion pictures ever produced. The story of Grecian mythology. "Diana the Huntress," has been dramatized by Dr. Francis Trevelyan Miller, and the films colored by F. B. Hockstetter. In the cast are: Paul Swan, Baroness Dewits, Lieut. Percy Bichards and Florence Fleming Noyes' dancing girls. Special music will be played by the National Theater orchestrs.

FLORENCE RITTENHOUSE POLI'S

Keith's-Vandevile.

Alexander Carr, the original Mawruss

aerial surprise, the organ recitals and the

Gayety-Burlesque

This week at the Gayety Theater Frank A. Burt and "The Girl Trust" ompany will be seen. Joe Hurtig has

real plot. The story is based on matri-monial entanglements and Burt has the part of Mozart Daudeleach who is much

Hurtig had also supplied a chorus of twenty-four girls whose wardrobe further enhance their charms. The settings for

buriesque. The first setting is an in-terior representing a reception at the home of Mrs. Harburg, at Great Neck,

L. L. while the second shows the lawn before her house. Others in the cast are Tom Haverly, John Behlman, Arthur

National, Today-Pluragraph Pic-

The Pluragraph Company's special pro-

Tom Haverly, John Behlme Putman, and Dally Barnes.

the two acts are said to furnish an

these complications. Mr.

MRS. FISKE

- NEXT

The Kelley Musical Comedy Company of nine singing farceurs, six of them girls, will present a tabloid musical ver-sion of John and Emma Ray's musical farce, "The Janitor," as the chief offer-ing in the Cosmos Theater bill this week. ing in the Cosmos Theater bill this week. The Three Moran Sisters, vaudeville instrumentalists on strings and brass, will offer a musical number, and the Walters-Clare company, a little play by Edgar Milton entitled, "It Always Happens." Ted Dickinson and Alice Deagon will present an offering of songs, repartee and comedy, entitled "Bits From Here and There;" Dick Burton will offer the latest Broadway jokes and parodies and Caprice Lewis will give aerial exhibitions. The Hearst-Selig news pictures will head the added attractions and the big photo-

The Hearst-Selig news pictures will head the added attractions and the big photoplay feature, shown only at 12:15, 4:45 and 6 p. m. daily, will feature Robert Edeson in "The Cawe Man."

The new bill for the last half of the week will present for the first time in Washington Albert Perry and company in "Reno and Return." Fred Roberts, Pealson and Goldie Elizabeth Otto. Pealson and Goldie, Elizabeth Dealy and sister, and the Kelly Musics Comedy Company. The Pathe weekly pictures will head the added attrac-tions and "In the Palace of the King"

tions and "In the Palace of the King" will be the photoplay special offering.

Tschaikowsky's "Marche Slav," selections from Verdi's "Ernani;" Brooks' fantasie, "Xmas Echoes;" Lizzt's reverie, "Consolation;" Perry's, "The Warbler's Serenade;" Coleman's "Maurice," and Roberts' "Music Bex Rag," both fex trots, and Schwartz's "Hitting the Trail," a syncopation, will be some of the selections of the orchestral program today. New specialties and other attractions.

## Alexander Carr, the original Mawruss Purlmutter of the New York production of the Montagu Glass comedy, "Potash & Perlmutter" is in vaudeville in "An April Shower," in which he will be seen here Bachelor's Honeymoon." This week will see the Hall Piapers at the Casino Theater in farce comedy. "A

the Casino Theater in farce comedy. "A Bachelor's Honeymoon," one of the Hoye

Shower," in which he will be seen here at Keith's this week. Mr. Carr is supported by a company and is credited with having a second "Music Master," even if abbreviated, in the little play. Next in ranking order among the four chief attractions in the bill will be B. A. Rolfe's augmented musical comedy, "The Bride Shop," featuring Andrew Tombes with Lola Wentworth and Basil Lynn. reinforced by many shop-girls who sing, dance, and wear the bridal finery of the day. The author is Fred De Fressac. The third offering will present James C. Morton and Frank F. Moore, the come

"The Tik Tok Man of Or" fame, week with the new Hall company, in a hodgepodge of chatter, patter, and handle the comedy. Louise Kent will be "nut" dances. Another headline addi- seen as the sister to the bacheltion will introduce Charles Olcott in "A Maude Comic Opera in Ten Minutes," in which loaned he burlesques the principal features. comedy Eburne, who has he buriesques the principal features comedy servant part similar to her or Other numbers will be Mignon, the little nal creation of "Coddles" in "A Pair mimic, Everest's Monkey Hippodrome,
Paul Porter and Alice Sullivan in a firtatious episode, the Ioleen sisters in an
Loew's Columbia—Paramount

Pathe pictorial.

At 3 and 8:15 p. m. today the bill will of unusual excellence is promofier Ernest Evans and Company in "The Society Circus," Morris Cronin and his merry men, Wyatt's Scotch Lads and ed by two of America's foremost artists, Pauline Clarence Oliver and Georgie Olp.

Pauline Frederico and Geraidine Farrar. Society Circus," Morris Croam
merry men, Wyatt's Scotch Lads and
Lassies, Clarence Oliver and Georgie Olp,
Milt Collins, Winsor McCay and "Gertie," Carl McCullough, Sylvia Loyal, the
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of the gerat villainesses in "Zesa" and
"Bella Donna" in which she scored repthat Pauline Frederick's interpretation
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of the gerat villainesses in "Zesa" and
"Bella Donna" in which she scored repterizations, it will be dispelled is seen in the title role of "I seen in the title role of "Lydis Offi-ore" during the first three days of the week, beginning tomorrow morning.
It is a tremendous role, portraying the

of the fact that her husband is a murdeter and who is placed upon the witness stand to be cross-examined by the man whose loyal devotion to herself and her little son has won her love.

The last four days of the week Geral-dine Farrar, the celebrated prima donna whose "Carmen" captivated the coun-try when seen upon the screen, will make her second appearance in motion pictures in a characterization totally gypsy. In "Temptation," whis Turnbull, she is seen as a cafe singer, who is offered the triumphs and giories who is offered the triumphs and gi rather than lose her sweetheart's love

### Blame Movies.

Heaven help the legitimate producers these days. The weekly salaries of an ordinary comedy now totals as much as a whole musical comedy used to cost, prima donnas, tenor, "show giris" and up-why, it is nailed to the mast com-pared to the way actors' salaries have rocketed in the last year, thanks to the